

**Web-chat Date: March 8, 2011**

**Topic: English Teaching and Learning in the ASEAN Community Era**

**Abstract:**

What does it mean for English language teachers in Southeast Asia to properly prepare for the reality of the changes proposed for the ASEAN Community in 2015? How can teachers manage their classrooms to accommodate the new era within the ASEAN learning communities? Are there certain existing pedagogical practices that could positively impact the results of our educational systems? How should our teacher training programs be retooled or redesigned to meet the new expectations/requirements of the stakeholders? How may our educational systems and curricula be affected? Will bilingual, multilingual, and/or immersion programs work best to serve the local or provincial educational districts? Will World Englishes and English for Specific Purposes play key roles in the creation of ELT for this new ASEAN Community era? In this web-chat, we will explore several issues, ideas, responses, and reactions on how best to equip the TEFL academic community to best respond to the English language needs of the imminent changes in the ASEAN Community.

**Transcript:**

**Damon Anderson:** Hello everyone. Welcome to our March English Roundtable Chat. We will start in about 30 minutes. Please feel free to submit any pre-comments or questions.

**Damon Anderson:** It is good to see you all. We will start our chat in about 5 minutes. Please feel free to submit and comments or questions.

**Damon Anderson:** Welcome everyone. Let's begin our chat. There were a couple of pre-comments that I will push forward to you all.

**Anirut Chumsawat:** What strategic plan do we do to help English teacher be aware that they have to change themselves for the country? The policy of government

**Anirut Chumsawat:** The policy of the government should be clear, manageable.

**Peter Chang:** How do you motivate your students to learn as an English teacher?

**Phanisara:** Hello Everyone. Nice to see you again. I already see some great questions.

**Phanisara:** I like what Aj. Anirut said. Teachers do have to keep a bigger picture in mind that what they actually do in the classrooms does affect the country and even the ASEAN goals in general.

**Damon Anderson:** Anirut, you ask a very good question. I think that teachers need to know that the KEY reason why students are studying English is changing/has changed. It is no longer just an academic tool, but it is an economic tool now.

**Peter Chang:** Hi there! glad to see u all.

**Damon Anderson:** Peter, I think that the goal of learning English is what is beginning to drive or motivate many students. They are beginning to understand that with English they can travel to get a better job.

**ubon sanpatchayapong:** Hello, this is Ubon. Nice to talk to you all again.

**Peter Chang:** yes, agree. but some stdents they don't.

**Damon Anderson:** When the borders open in 2015 and people from other are getting the better jobs, it will begin to sink in.

**Tresha:** It's so good to be back and meet people here.

**anirut chumsawat:** I think English teachers who can inspire students why they learn English. It's better and better now for Thailand that we have to contact one another in Asean countries using Englishes. This exposure makes key stakeholders realise importances of English.

**Damon Anderson:** Welcome Aj. Ubon and Tresha.

**guest:** from some of the things said here I see one of the questions is how do for profit institutes address these questions as opposed to a privately endowed institute or a government institute

**ubon sanpatchayapong:** Peter, I agree with you. This is very universal. So, we teacher has to work hard and update things to catch up with them and with the world.

**Peter Chang:** hard to convince each of the students, young kids in particular, to learn.

**Damon Anderson:** Peter, when you talk about young kids, how young are you talking about?

**anirut chumsawat:** whenever students learn English meaningful , we as english teachers are easy to let them learn. Learn from heart, head and hand.

**Peter Chang:** i'm talking those teenagers.

**Peter Chang:** 10-12 years old

**ubon sanpatchayapong:** In Thailand, not just the Government or the Ministry of Education are alert to the change but all are aware of the obvious significance of English and our neighboring countries different languages.

**Phanisara:** I agree with Aj. Ubon. We do need to keep up. Even with the ELT professionals (who might already have good paying jobs) needs to integrate their content area knowledge more to compete in the new era.

**ubon sanpatchayapong:** In my opinion, students nowadays know how crucial English is and most of them try hard to be good at it. My students at Mahidol Uni. are , for instance.

**anirut chumsawat:** We are dancing for change, but in practice how can we do. only policy???

**Phanisara:** Teachers in different neighboring countries do somehow need to collaborate more effectively together to create a stronger ELT learning communities.

**Damon Anderson:** It is easier for students in the big cities to see a reason to learn English. I think if we can connect the city students with the rural students via internet and mobile tech they can motivate each other.

**Peter Chang:** In my country some parents sent their kids to language centers when they were young.

**Phanisara:** Those who are in the language centers---the classes can be conducted in such a way that they can integrate the use technology or guest speakers from bordering countries to join and learn English together.

**ubon sanpatchayapong:** I think to prepare students for the ASEAN Community is great, but we teachers have to be well-prepared all the time, not just when some changes, like the ASEAN Community, enhances learning or better teaching. We can be good role models. I am sure a lot of us are.

**anirut chumsawat:** If we do as Khun Demon said it is great. it means we bring IT to make them eager to learn more

**Peter Chang:** but not all. so in my class, students are mix-leveled

**Damon Anderson:** Anirut, Policy change is always a difficult issue. When people in the governments change, so do many of the policies. One of the best things would be to work with our professional organizations like Thai TESOL to help us as a profession to have a better sense of the needs and perhaps have a voice.

**ubon sanpatchayapong:** be good...

**Peter Chang:** Yes, I agree to make use of IT in teaching.

**Damon Anderson:** Peter, it really doesn't matter if you have differentiated classes. There is much you can do with the students.

**ubon sanpatchayapong:** I have to leave now. Sorry, I cannot be with you till 4.00 pm. All the best to everyone. Bye.

**guest:** There does seem to be a question in rural parts of Laos about the relevancy of the government's education program including English. You are asking people to make a major investment without tangible benefit beyond reading, writing and math.

**Damon Anderson:** Thanks for stopping by, Ubon.

**Phanisara:** I agree with our ThaiTESOL President, Aj. Ubon.....yes, good/effective role models in the countries help. Thus I believe the need to improve better ELT development for Non Native English Teachers.

**Peter Chang:** see you Ubon

**Damon Anderson:** Guest, With the borders opening up in ASEAN in 2015, the rural folks may see tangible results in the fact that they can travel to get jobs elsewhere.

**Peter Chang:** exactly. we need to develop our profession.

**Phanisara:** Policy changes need to be derived from the local ELT community in practice.

**Damon Anderson:** Peter, you are right. How do you think we could develop our profession more?

**Damon Anderson:** I am talking about developing our profession, not an individual teacher's professional development.

**Damon Anderson:** Do you think that all teachers truly feel that they are part of a professional cadre? Or do they just see themselves as individuals with professional training?

**Peter Chang:** join some groups related to ELT.

**Bruce:** teachers should have a chance to experience other cultures/countries too - develop the teachers then they can help develop students

**sanda thanpe:** hi, i'm sanda from myanmar

**Phanisara:** There will be a lot of language and professional issues as 2015 comes. But as we can do our best in opening up the ELT classrooms to excel in the profession, we will be ready to solve each of the challenges that arise.

**Damon Anderson:** Hi Sanda. Welcome to the chat.

**Damon Anderson:** Bruce, I agree with you. Teachers need to have more intercultural experience so they can teach English for intercultural communication.

**sanda thanpe:** thanks i haven't got proper connection so i'm late, sorry

**Phanisara:** I'm glad you can join us Sanda.

**guest:** I don't think Americans see themselves in the same light as others. Note that in America we are having a discussion about teaching and collective bargaining

**anirut chumsawat:** at my uni now, we start teaching english classroom expressions to student teachers who have non english majors before practise teaching in different schools in the community. It is good idea but difficult for non english major teachers when they teach pronunciation. Students might be confused when different teachers pronounce different pronunciation. In the long term, difficult to correct! my solution is giving them learning phonetics on web for university of iowa. it may solve the problem. I think.

**sanda thanpe:** i also agree but teachers need to have proper trainings to excel their students's abilities

**guest:** I'm not if Americans see themselves as being part of a profession in the same way as doctors/lawyers do.

**Bruce:** but we should also remember that there is no one right way to pronounce...

**Peter Chang:** Before letting your students expose to other culture we should expose in advance.

**Phanisara:** That's an effective method, Aj. Anirut. Students will need to be exposed to different Englishes and different English pronunciation.

**Damon Anderson:** I agree Khun Nina. Actually that is also a good response to Sanda's comment.

**sanda thanpe:** for us in myanmar. pronunciation is also hinder to advance students' spoken skills as well

**Bruce:** as long as people can communicate, I think that's the most vital skill

**Peter Chang:** to know better of other cultures and we learn to respect.

**sanda thanpe:** though teachers here are try to teach with sort of accent of native speakers but students still difficulty to catch up with that

**Bruce:** I teach at a university where we have students from all over Asia and ASEAN - sometimes it is very difficult to understand all these different types of Englishes

**Phanisara:** I agree. Comprehensibility is the key.

**Damon Anderson:** Bruce, you are correct in that it is not about accent (American, British, Thai, Lao), but it is about clear communication.

**sanda thanpe:** do you have any suggestion for the learners of english to improve listening skill as well as speaking skill

**Damon Anderson:** That is a good topic for another chat, Sanda. Students need to learn to be active listeners and need to learn how to listen in another language.

**Bruce:** Sanda - I recommend BBC, CNN - listen as much as they can online and on TV, radio

**Peter Chang:** As an English teacher it is a basic requirement to pronounce clearly.

**Phanisara:** All of the four skills need to be interconnected and integrated as much as possible in all of our lessons.

**Bruce:** Phanisara, it depends also on which level we teach and who we teach (adults or children)

**Bruce:** I teach academic writing, so we don't focus much on listening, for example

**Damon Anderson:** Getting back to our main topic, I think that teachers should form good professional communities in which they share best practices and ideas. These could be small groups within a school or city, or larger.

**guest:** VOA's slowed down English is very helpful

**Bruce:** I think we need to become more familiar with each other's "accents" and way of speaking

**Phanisara:** I agree with Bruce. But also ---Voice of America Special English is also recommended. Students (especially for beginning and intermediate levels) can practice listening to the news at the slower pace.

**sanda thanpe:** the problem is that some local teachers themselves mispronounce to teach their children in rural area so i think they need some teacher trainings to improve their skills as well

**Bruce:** Damon - something like what we're doing now, right?

**Damon Anderson:** Yes, Bruce.

**Phanisara:** TOTAL agree Sanda. Teachers themselves do definitely need language training.

**anirut chumsawat:** Sanda, let them learn by their own self. this summer I let my students go to Samui and Phuket practise speaking and listening skills they still are weak and report me back using learning contract. I hope it works well.

**sanda thanpe:** yap agree to listen VOA and BBC for good listening skill

**Damon Anderson:** There is much out there on the internet, on CDs, etc. that a teacher can use in the classroom to help teach the students. Much of this is free.

**Peter Chang:** Hum. I agree with Sanda.

**Phil Owen:** I've seen the idea of communities fo practice come up several times. Everyone nods in agreement. And no one does it.

**Damon Anderson:** Phil, I have seen small groups of teachers begin to form such communities.

**sanda thanpe:** absolutely. it is hard to organize tham to get help

**Phanisara:** I agree Phil. It seems that we know that community of learning is helpful. But it doesn't come naturally to us. So one doesn't know HOW exactly to engage in it effectively.

**Damon Anderson:** They are doing it over lunch or coffee. It doesn't need to start out so formal.

**Bruce:** Phil do you think TESOL conferences etc. would be considered a good opportunity for teachers to share and learn from each other?

**Phanisara:** Our NATURAL way is to be competitive instead of being collaborative. This will definitely be an issue when ASEAN opens up.

**Damon Anderson:** Bruce, I definitely feel that such conferences are good for teachers.

**sanda thanpe:** we teachers are willing to help community but sometimes there may be misunderstanding among them

**Phil Owen:** Bruce, conferences are great places to talk and learn, but not for long-term in-depth conversations. Which is too bad.

**naraporn:** On the condition that both teachers and students realize they need to be more competitive.

**Bruce:** Phanisara, I also think sometimes teachers are jealous of each other and don't want to share.

**sanda thanpe:** so I think we need proper connection and mutual understanding between us

**anirut chumsawat:** The other choice is learning for web based learning provided by teachers and writing log to teachers to assess their learning. I've done it. It is very useful.

**sanda thanpe:** e resources are valuable for the teachers of English

**Bruce:** we've talked about knowledge management (KM) but it doesn't work because people do not share!

**Damon Anderson:** That is why I was suggesting a more informal sort of community. It seems in those settings people share more because they don't feel threatened or competitive. They build the trust much more quickly.

**Ni Phyo San:** Hi Damon, everything is going well. I think teachers need training not only in language also in community development, for example.

**Ni Phyo San:** As today's topic is based on the ASEAN community.

**sanda thanpe:** yes, Bruce. sharing is good but they sometimes are not willing to do

**Ni Phyo San:** there are many things teachers should be aware of.

**sanda thanpe:** hi, Ni Phyo

**Damon Anderson:** Ni Phyo San, thank you. I agree with you. We do need to learn how to develop such communities.

**anirut chumsawat:** anyways, Thai TESOL should invite more participants from primary and secondary schools to share voices to help improve our English teaching to cope with ASEAN borderless.

**Bruce:** Ni Phyo what do you mean by "community development" how do we do that?

**Ni Phyo San:** As your question goes on ESP perceptive as well, I do agree with that point as ESP teachers consider many things about need analysis or survey or other needs of the students and the community.

**naraporn:** That's why Phanisara is using the word 'competitive'. Teachers need to know they'll lag behind if they don't improve.

**sanda thanpe:** KM is very important to share between us to get mutual understanding and sharing our teaching learning experiences

**Ni Phyo San:** Hi Sanda and all.

**Peter Chang:** I think you can start with organizing a group on the FB.

**Damon Anderson:** Peter, What is FB?

**anirut chumsawat:** happy sharing with you all krub. bye

**Ni Phyo San:** Bruce, this is the subject I also want to know. As I am also attending social work diploma in our country. I become aware of other factors to think about in the teaching process.

**Phanisara:** I agree with Aj. Naraporn. They also lag behind if they don't cooperate.

**Damon Anderson:** Thank you for joining us Aj Anirut!

**Peter Chang:** Facebook.

**sanda thanpe:** if we hear more voices of teachers sharing that will great help to each others

**Peter Chang:** you can find many professional groups there.

**Ni Phyo San:** like child psychology or cause and effect of their behavior and what makes them slow in their learning abilities

**Bruce:** Ni Phyo - maybe include parents and other community members in the teaching and learning process? Encourage parents to read to children, for example?

**Phanisara:** Love the idea of parent's involvement.

**Damon Anderson:** Bruce, I think that modeling is one of the best ways of inspiring students. I like the idea of parents or older brothers and sisters reading to children.

**sanda thanpe:** i already joined on TEYLs group, u can find so many interesting topics on that

**sanda thanpe:** sound good for [participating parents those are the primary teacher of children

**Ni Phyo San:** definitely true, Sanda if we can feel free to share.

**Ni Phyo San:** Exactly. Bruce.



**Ni Phyo San:** Not encouraging parents to read to the children

**Damon Anderson:** I can't believe that we have less than 10 minutes remaining in today's chat. Do you have any suggestions of topics for our April chat? And when in April should we have our chat. April 12 is the day before the Thai holiday.

**Ni Phyo San:** As Damon said in the workshop in our country, a little change to be made in our society, for example.

**sanda thanpe:** how about using mother language in the english classroom?

**Peter Chang:** Why not NI Phi?

**Bruce:** but the problem is if the parents are illiterate or don't know English or too busy selling noodles and making money...

**Ni Phyo San:** learning style or controlling the children

**Damon Anderson:** Bruce, it doesn't have to be the parent, but someone the child knows and admires.

**Ni Phyo San:** April 12 is the eve of our new year and my birthday too.

**Damon Anderson:** WOW! Happy Birthday Ni Phyo San!!!

**Bruce:** yes, like Big Brother/Big Sister type organization

**Phanisara:** Language learners learn most by following the modeling than "listen and learn" method.

**Damon Anderson:** Yes, Bruce.

**Damon Anderson:** Here in Bangkok in a large park in the city, they have a session on Saturdays where older people read to young people. It is great to see.

**Phanisara:** If parents don't know English themselves, at least they can read to their children in the native language. Solidify L1 literacy. ANY encouragement for language development from home is a great help. Result in great impact with future learning.

**Bruce:** oh I didn't know that before. Very interesting

**Damon Anderson:** It could be story telling and doesn't have to be reading. Tell local folktales in English that the students already know in their own language.

**Damon Anderson:** Maybe give the stories a few small twists to keep it interesting.

**Phanisara:** Thank you for the wonderful webchat. This webchat stems from the topic of "Collaboration" from the previous webchat. Great sharing everyone.

**Damon Anderson:** What topic do you recommend for April? We have Earth Day in April. Should we do something related to that?

**Damon Anderson:** Today is International Women's day!!!

**Bruce:** thank you! It has been a very insightful discussion!

**Peter Chang:** Yes, thank you all for sharing.

**Tresha:** Thank you for the all the sharing. I learned so much. Thank you, everyone!

**Peter Chang:** Happy Women's Day to all ladies, too.

**Phanisara:** Thank you everyone.

**Phil Owen:** Bye, thans for letting me sit in.

**Damon Anderson:** Thank you all for joining us today. Khun Nina will post the transcript on our web site. Thank you all for your valuable contributions!! See you in April.

**Damon Anderson:** The chat is now closed, but feel free to read through the transcript above. Thanks again everyone.

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